

Amendments to the Claims:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

Listing of Claims:

Claim 1 (Currently Amended): An apparatus for emptying containers ~~(2)~~ of fruit and vegetable produce ~~(3)~~, the apparatus comprising

a tipping device ~~(9)~~ for tipping at least one container ~~(2)~~ and movable between a first operating position to load said container ~~(2)~~, and a second operating position to unload the container ~~(2)~~; and

a conveying device ~~(8)~~ having an input station ~~(26)~~ for receiving the container ~~(2)~~ from the tipping device ~~(9)~~, and an emptying station ~~(32)~~ for emptying the container ~~(2)~~, the conveying device ~~(8)~~ feeding the container ~~(2)~~ in a given first direction ~~(25)~~ and along a path ~~(T1)~~ extending between said input and emptying stations ~~(26, 32)~~; and

wherein said path ~~(T1)~~ is of a length ~~(L1)~~, measured parallel to said first direction ~~(25)~~, at least equal to a length ~~(L2)~~ of said container ~~(2)~~, also measured parallel to said first

direction  $\langle 25 \rangle$ , and

wherein the emptying of the container commences after the container has been entirely unloaded from the tipping device and moved along said path.

~~such that emptying of the container  $\langle 2 \rangle$  commences when the container  $\langle 2 \rangle$  has been entirely unloaded from the tipping device  $\langle 9 \rangle$  onto said conveying device  $\langle 8 \rangle$ .~~

Claim 2 (Currently Amended): An The apparatus as claimed in Claim 1, and also comprising

an ejecting device  $\langle 34 \rangle$  for transferring said container  $\langle 2 \rangle$  from the tipping device  $\langle 9 \rangle$  to the conveying device  $\langle 8 \rangle$  at a first traveling speed  $\langle V1 \rangle$ ; the conveying device  $\langle 8 \rangle$  feeding the container  $\langle 2 \rangle$  through said emptying station  $\langle 32 \rangle$  at a second traveling speed  $\langle V2 \rangle$  lower than said first traveling speed  $\langle V1 \rangle$ .

Claim 3 (Currently Amended): An The apparatus as claimed in Claim 1,

wherein said path  $\langle T1 \rangle$  is of a length  $\langle L1 \rangle$ , measured parallel to said first direction  $\langle 25 \rangle$ , greater than a length  $\langle L2 \rangle$  of said container  $\langle 2 \rangle$ , also measured parallel to said first

direction  $\langle 25 \rangle$ .

Claim 4 (Currently Amended) : An The apparatus as claimed in Claim 3,

wherein the conveying device  $\langle 8 \rangle$  comprises first and second conveying means  $\langle 27, 28 \rangle$  arranged in series along said path  $\langle T1 \rangle$ ; the first conveying means  $\langle 27 \rangle$  feeding said container  $\langle 2 \rangle$  along a portion of the path  $\langle T1 \rangle$  having a length, measured parallel to said first direction  $\langle 25 \rangle$ , at least equal to a length  $\langle L2 \rangle$  of said container  $\langle 2 \rangle$ , also measured parallel to said first direction  $\langle 25 \rangle$ .

Claim 5 (Currently Amended) : An The apparatus as claimed in Claim 4, and also comprising

an ejecting device  $\langle 34 \rangle$  for transferring said container  $\langle 2 \rangle$  from the tipping device  $\langle 9 \rangle$  to said first conveying means  $\langle 27 \rangle$  at a first traveling speed  $\langle V1 \rangle$ .

Claim 6 (Currently Amended) : An The apparatus as claimed in Claim 5, and also comprising actuating means for so controlling said second conveying means  $\langle 28 \rangle$  as to feed the container  $\langle 2 \rangle$

through said emptying station  $\{32\}$  at a second traveling speed  $\{v_2\}$  lower than said first traveling speed  $\{v_1\}$ , and for so controlling said first conveying means  $\{27\}$  as to selectively feed the container  $\{2\}$  at said first traveling speed  $\{v_1\}$  when transferring the container  $\{2\}$  from the tipping device  $\{9\}$  to the first conveying means  $\{27\}$ , and at said second traveling speed  $\{v_2\}$  during at least part of the transfer of the container  $\{2\}$  from the first to the second conveying means  $\{27, 28\}$ .

Claim 7 (Currently Amended): An The apparatus as claimed in Claim 1, and also comprising

a further conveying device  $\{7\}$  for feeding said container  $\{2\}$  to said tipping device  $\{9\}$  in a second direction  $\{10\}$  sloping with respect to said first direction  $\{25\}$  by an angle  $\{A\}$  of other than  $90^\circ$ .

Claim 8 (Currently Amended): An apparatus for emptying containers  $\{2\}$  of fruit and vegetable produce  $\{3\}$ , the apparatus comprising

a tipping device  $\{9\}$  for tipping at least one container  $\{2\}$  and movable between a first operating position to load said

container  $\langle 2 \rangle$ , and a second operating position to unload the container  $\langle 2 \rangle$ ;

a conveying device  $\langle 8 \rangle$  having an input station  $\langle 26 \rangle$  for receiving the container  $\langle 2 \rangle$  from the tipping device  $\langle 9 \rangle$ , and an emptying station  $\langle 32 \rangle$  for emptying the container  $\langle 2 \rangle$ , the conveying device  $\langle 8 \rangle$  feeding the container  $\langle 2 \rangle$  in a given first direction  $\langle 25 \rangle$  and along a path  $\langle T1 \rangle$  extending between said input and emptying stations  $\langle 26, 32 \rangle$  and having a length  $\langle L1 \rangle$ , measured parallel to said first direction  $\langle 25 \rangle$ , at least equal to a length  $\langle L2 \rangle$  of said container  $\langle 2 \rangle$ , also measured parallel to said first direction  $\langle 25 \rangle$ ; and

an ejecting device  $\langle 34 \rangle$  for transferring said container  $\langle 2 \rangle$  from the tipping device  $\langle 9 \rangle$  to the conveying device  $\langle 8 \rangle$  at a first traveling speed  $\langle V1 \rangle$ ;

wherein the conveying device  $\langle 8 \rangle$  feeds the container  $\langle 2 \rangle$  through said emptying station  $\langle 32 \rangle$  at a second traveling speed  $\langle V2 \rangle$  lower than said first traveling speed  $\langle V1 \rangle$ , and

wherein the emptying of the container commences after the container has been entirely unloaded from the tipping device and moved along said path.